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A study was conducted to compare the attitudes of teachers toward the professionalization of teaching with the attitudes of state and local educational association leadership personnel. A questionnaire based on resolutions acted upon by the New York State Teachers Association House of Delegates examined opinions of both groups on programs designed to foster professional advancement, to promote association gains, and to improve working rights and privileges. Of the 809 questionnaires distributed (674 to a proportionate sample of teachers from 45 selected school districts representative of elementary and secondary; rural, urban, and suburban; large and small schools), 529 were returned, representing all segments of the sample. Results indicate that the views of association leaders and classroom teachers differ significantly: In general, teachers tend not to accept responsibilities necessary for professional status, while association leaders are knowledgeable about professional matters and willing to work toward attainment of professional goals. Suggestions for programs to advance professional status: (1) Local associations, with state and national cooperation, might place greater emphasis on conveying to their members a better understanding of professional ethics, responsibilities, and knowledge of the characteristics of a profession. (2) Teacher preparation institutions could include the foregoing in their programs. (JS)

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THE CHANGING WORLD OF THE PRINCIPAL

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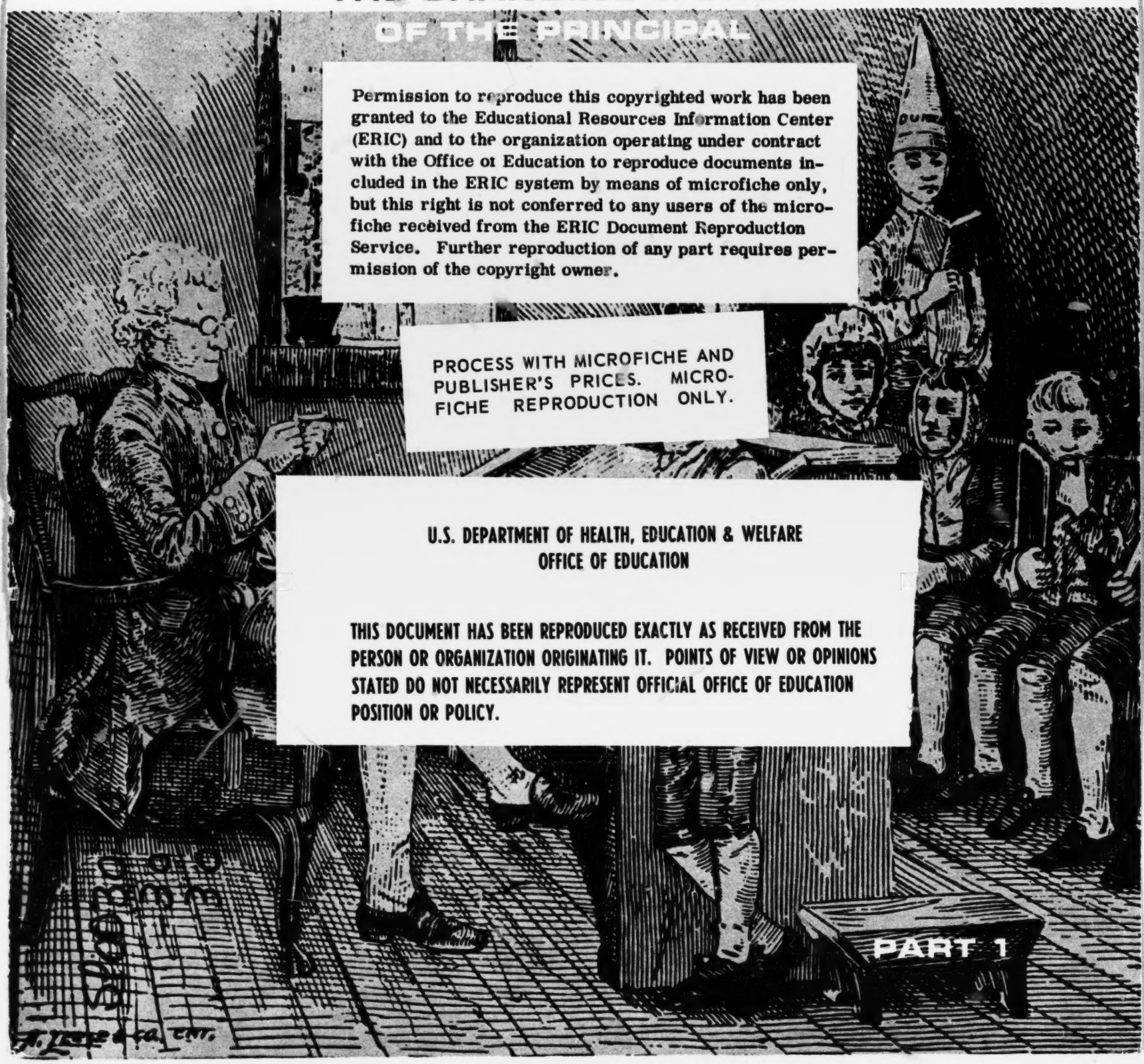

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Teaching as a Profession

Attitudes of Teachers and Association Leaders

VERNE G. JEFFERS

AT present, teaching does not appear to qualify as a full-fledged profession. Classroom teachers express a desire for professional status but do not indicate a desire to accept accompanying responsibilities. As a group they seem more interested in promoting personal gains. The real desires of teachers seem to be in directions other than that of professional goals and are on a different plane from those of association leaders. Much of the literature dealing with teaching as a profession suggests that teachers do not possess adequate knowledge of the obligations and privileges commensurate with professional status, implying that teachers would be more apt to work toward professional goals if they were more aware of the implications of professionalism.

Educational associations have been primarily responsible for the advancement of teaching toward professional status. The purpose of an association is to do collectively what cannot be done individually. When a group encompasses large numbers, each member cannot participate as an individual in all associational activities and elected representatives must serve the larger group. In theory, these elected leaders speak for and act in the interest of the group that places them in the leadership role; if they truly represent the group, their conduct reflects the attitudes and behavior of the total group. However, because experiences of those in leadership roles may not be common to experiences of members of the group, the thinking of individual leaders may not necessarily reflect group goals and there is no assurance that the leaders will act in accordance with group desires. Unless the leaders and the group they represent have similar goals, any great accomplishments will be difficult to achieve.

This article reports the results of a study to compare the attitudes of teachers toward the professionalization of teaching with the attitudes of state and local educational association leadership personnel. The study, which was conducted in New York State, was made by examining opinions of the two groups on programs designed to foster professional advancement, to promote associational gains, and to improve working rights and privileges.[1] It was prompted by a concern for the professional status of teaching and by an interest in knowing why education has not fulfilled the professional ambitions often expressed by individual members.

Virtually without exception, the literature dealing with teaching as a profession expresses the need for recognized professional status for teachers and charges the teaching body, through its associations, with the responsibility of working for professional goals. The study provides indications of the extent to which professional associations have accepted this responsibility, the degree to which educational association leaders reflect the feeling of the body they represent, and the receptivity of classroom teachers to moves in the direction of professionalism.

Background for the Study

Teaching has been referred to as a profession for so many years that it is common to use the term "teaching profession" without reflecting on the degree to which teachers demonstrate professional characteristics. However, many people—laymen as well as educators—are becoming increasingly concerned about the professional level of teaching and the extent to which teachers possess professional characteristics.

The 1950 progress report of the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards states: "Teaching is far from being a

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profession in many parts of the United States today, and there is no state or territory in which teaching may be said to have reached adequate professional standards." [2] Three years later the same group reported, "We shall have professional status only when every teacher has developed a sense of security, a sense of professional competence, a sense of occupational confidence, a sense of devotion, and a sense of rapport with the public to the extent that he has within himself an awareness of being a professional person." [3]

Many authors concur that the teaching body has not identified and defined criteria necessary for professional status. Goold, commenting in the September 1955 issue of the *Journal of Teacher Education,* states, "In order to attain full professional status, the profession must accept full professional responsibility. Such responsibility should include definition of membership, of basic preparation, of a basic code of ethics including enforcement provisions, improvement of skills, and precise standards for the protection of the public." [4] Brubacher expresses further concern, indicating that teaching does not possess the prestige necessary for unquestioned professional status. He suggests that because standards for training teachers have been lowered in an attempt to overcome the chronic shortage of teachers, the status of the entire profession suffers.[5] McDonald asserts that if teaching is to become a true profession, teachers themselves must wield the greatest influence in setting standards for teacher education.[6]

Lieberman expounds at length on the problems of professionalism in teaching, indicating how and why teaching does not meet professional criteria. He asserts that "teachers cannot expect to achieve professional status until the teachers themselves participate in the drive toward professionalization. They cannot and will not do this effectively unless they have a clear understanding of the problems of professionalizing of education. In the past, teachers and teacher training institutions have usually ignored these problems." [7]

Among the needs that must be met in order to professionalize education, Lieberman identifies the following:

1. Need for agreement on the function of education and on who should decide what the function shall be.
2. Need for authority in education within the educational group.
3. Need for professional autonomy, especially in such matters as entry into and expulsion from the profession, certification, accreditation, and teacher education.
4. Need for a strong professional organization that represents the entire profession.
5. Need for a code of ethics that will assure professional behavior.

The "New Horizons" report [8] suggests procedures for bringing teaching up to a professional level and reiterates many of the points upon which Lieberman expounds. The report points out that members of the profession, individually and as a group, have not accepted responsibilities necessary for carrying out an adequate program for a mature profession.

The National Education Association's realization that teaching did not possess adequate standards for a profession prompted the formulation in 1946 of the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, commonly referred to as the TEPS Commission or NCTEPS. The Commission's charge was to develop a program for improving standards that would achieve the status of a recognized profession for teaching. The history of professions shows that both the "character of service provided and the prestige and security of those engaged in any profession rest very largely upon the extent to which the professional organization determines and controls the standards of preparation and admission." [9] To assure self-regulation by the profession, the Commission established the following goals:

1. To improve standards in selecting candidates to prepare for teaching.
2. To maintain a balanced supply of teachers.
3. To develop more effective programs of teacher preparation.
4. To improve in-service growth.
5. To provide higher standards of certification.
6. To foster a professional concept of teaching.

Using the above goals as guidelines, the National Commission launched a program designed to raise professional standards. TEPS commissions were established in a large number of states to work in cooperation with the National Commission.

A major focus of the Commission's activities has been directed toward institutions that prepare teachers. One of the early and significant tasks was to form an accrediting body that would evaluate programs of teacher preparatory institutions so that minimum standards for preparing qualified teachers could be established. Not only would accrediting by a group representing the profession assure minimum standards for those seeking entry into the profession, but, with similar standards applied on a national basis, individuals prepared in accredited institutions could be certified to practice in any state. This is not presently possible due to variations in standards of certification from state to state.

Pre-service training is viewed by the TEPS Commission as highly important in developing a well-informed body of practitioners in the profession. Armstrong suggests that teachers should have specific preparation for their professional responsibilities. ". . . the new teacher becomes a member of a school faculty and a member of the teaching profession. The pre-service curriculum should, therefore, help the prospective teacher to understand his functions in working with a faculty group and his responsibilities as a member of the teaching profession." [10] A study reported by Kinney indicated that teacher preparation institutions are not providing this learning experience for the prospective teacher. He reports that many serious problems in education today are due to the failure of preparing institutions to provide training to carry on tasks involved in the area of professional responsibilities.[11]

For these and other reasons, in-service education of teachers assumes a highly significant role, and the TEPS Commission has been increasing its attention to this means of preparing teachers for their responsibilities as members of a profession.

In spite of efforts—by TEPS, by many other professional groups, by teacher preparatory institutions—progress toward professionalization of the teaching profession has been slow and achievements have been limited. The lack of success may be partially due to the attitudes of teachers toward professionalization. Many authors express doubts that teachers are aware of the problems of professionalism or are prepared to accept obligations that are imposed upon attainment of professional status. Stout found that beginning teachers are too often unwilling to accept responsibilities that are inherently a part of the professional life of a teacher. They are sometimes uninformed or indifferent toward professional ethics and/or professional organizations.[12] Teachers need to possess the desire for professional status to the extent that they are not only willing to carry out professional obligations but actively seek opportunities to do so.

Procedure for Study

The New York State Teachers Association is generally recognized as the principal educational organization representing teachers in New York State. The main organ through which the teaching body speaks is the Association's House of Delegates. Resolutions developed during the year and acted upon by the House of Delegates guide association activities for the ensuing year.

A questionnaire was developed utilizing statements derived from resolutions acted upon by the House of Delegates from 1958 through 1964. Each statement was worded to suggest that the condition, policy, or action should be attained for classroom teachers. A panel of eight judges assigned each statement to one of three categories—professional, associational, or working rights and privileges. Fifteen statements from each of the three categories were included in the questionnaire. A seven-step Likert scale offered choices ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

A proportionate sample of 674 teachers was drawn from 45 selected school districts. Using a ratio of one to seven, representation from elementary and secondary schools; rural, urban, and suburban schools; small and large schools was assured in the classroom teacher portion of the sample.

Association leaders included in the study consisted of state and local leadership personnel. Permanent staff members and elected officers of the New York State Teachers Association constituted state level leaders. Presidents of local associations and House of Delegates representatives, as well as those teachers in the classroom teachers sample who had held these positions within the past three years, were designated as local association leaders. A few principals were included in the association leadership group.

Questionnaires for classroom teachers and local association leaders were distributed through the

office of the chief school officer of the participating school districts. State leaders received questionnaires by direct mail. The identity of individual respondents remained anonymous so reminders to those who failed to return questionnaires were impossible. Of the 809 questionnaires distributed, 529 usable questionnaires were returned. All segments of the sample asked to participate were represented.

Results and Conclusions

Results of the study indicated that association leaders and classroom teachers differed significantly on views toward activities and conditions designed to professionalize teaching. As was predicted, association leaders viewed professional goals with much higher esteem than did classroom teachers. The data did not indicate whether the differences were a result of differential experiences that leaders had due to their positions or whether those serving in leadership roles were by nature different types of persons.

The relatively low rating given by classroom teachers to many associational items suggested possible rejection of many associational ideals. A large portion of classroom teachers did not seem to care or were not aware of the role that educational associations play in advancing professional ideals. Results of the study may suggest that teachers do not even recognize generally the role associations have played in securing improved working conditions for teachers.

Classroom teachers may have tended to reject certain associational goals because they have greater interest in improvement of salary, fringe benefits, and working conditions than they have in other aspects of associational activities. For a number of years, teachers have been purported to be underpaid and overworked. Progress has been made but many teachers still tend to believe that they are not receiving what is rightfully due them. The scapegoat they hold responsible for this state of affairs may often be the educational association. As a result, many teachers perhaps feel antagonism toward the organization that allegedly has worked toward improving the lot of the teacher. Hence, other items related to activities designed to strengthen the position of an educational association might have been looked upon with disfavor by many teachers.

Since classroom teachers may not be as knowledgeable as association leaders regarding general characteristics of a profession, or the deficiencies in education for fulfilling professional criteria, they may be prone to think of "professional" specifically in terms of salary, fringe benefits, and improved working conditions. On the other hand, association leaders may be more aware of the broader connotation of professionalism and of the deficiencies existing in education that deter achievement of professional status for teaching. With these assumptions in mind, it was further assumed that classroom teachers would view activities and provisions designed to improve working conditions and privileges more positively than association leaders. The study, however, revealed that there was little difference between teachers and association leaders in attitude toward items dealing with working rights and privileges. Actually, association leaders rated this category slightly above the classroom teachers' rating of the category.

Selected demographic data were analyzed to determine if differences within the ranks could be identified that would reveal possible demographic variables influencing the views of association leaders and teachers toward the professionalization of teaching. The over-all pattern of significance is presented in the following table:

Summary of Results of t *Test Application on Selected Variables*

Variable	Total Group			Association Leaders			Classroom Teachers		
	P	A	W	P	A	W	P	A	W
Age level	.05	.01	NS	NS	NS	NS	.05	.01	NS
Sex	.01	NS	.01	NS	NS	NS	.01	NS	.01
Degree Held	.01	.05	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Pre-service Education	NS	NS	NS	.01	.01	NS	NS	NS	NS
Years of Experience	.01	.01	.05	NS	NS	NS	.01	.01	.05
Type of School	NS	.05	.05	NS	.05	NS	NS	NS	.01
Teaching Level	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Association Membership	.01	.01	NS	.01	.01	.05	NS	.01	NS

P—professional category
A—associational category
W—working rights and privileges category
.01—significance at the .01 level
.05—significance at the .05 level
NS—non-significance at the .05 level

Differences among association leaders in responses to the questionnaire were associated with type of pre-service institution attended, type of

school system, and association membership. Those attending normal schools or state teachers colleges for pre-service training rated professional and associational categories higher than did those attending liberal arts colleges or universities. Leaders from city school systems were more positive toward the associational category than were those in other types of school systems. Those holding membership in NEA ranked all categories higher than did those who did not belong to NEA.

Differences in classroom teachers' responses to the questionnaire were associated with age, sex, years of experience, type of school system, and association membership. Older teachers, males, and those with seven or more years of experience viewed professional items more positively than did their counterparts. Older teachers, those with seven or more years of experience, and those holding NEA membership rated the associational category higher than others. Male teachers, those with seven or more years of experience, and teachers employed in city school systems indicated greater interest in improving working rights and privileges.

Level of education did not appear to be related to attitudes toward professional, associational, or working rights items.

As previously indicated, many educators concerned with professionalism in teaching have expressed anxiety about the level of awareness and degree of acceptance of professional responsibilities by classroom teachers. It was suggested that classroom teachers merely want to teach and that they show little interest in vital educational matters other than teacher welfare. The assumption that teachers are uninformed or indifferent toward professional responsibilities was ascribed to lack of training, especially in pre-service institutions.

The thesis that teachers do not generally recognize their responsibilities to the profession was borne out in the study. If the expressed desire for professional status is a true indication of teacher aspirations, it would seem that a higher priority should have been placed on acceptance of professional responsibilities necessary for professionalization of teaching. With younger teachers and those with fewer years of experience placing less emphasis on professional responsibilities, lack of specific training to inform prospective teachers of their responsibilities could be a contributing factor.

It is questioned whether raising standards of pre-service training by extending the number of years of preparation has improved professionalism in teaching. Perhaps the pre-service curriculum has not helped prospective teachers to understand their responsibilities as members of the teaching profession. Education might well take a cue from the other professions and offer specific courses that would instruct teacher candidates on ethical behavior of professional persons and the responsibilities they are expected to accept as members of the teaching profession. Indoctrination regarding the expectations that the profession has for candidates to its ranks might well be an integral part of the pre-service program.

If the professionalization of teaching is to be successful, classroom teachers already in service need more exposure to the characteristics of a profession. Awareness of the implications of professional status and the attendant responsibilities incurred by members of a profession must be developed within the group currently making up the teaching body. No teachers should be overlooked if wider horizons for professional experiences are to be offered to classroom teachers. It was revealed in the study that a preponderance of secondary school teachers assumed leadership roles at the local level. On the basis of percentage of questionnaire returns, it appears that high school teachers demonstrated greater interest in activities related to their profession than did elementary school teachers. However, elementary school teachers who did respond indicated the same level of concern as did secondary school teachers in their responses to the questionnaire.

Local associations play a very important part in the extension of professionalism in teaching. Much of the in-service work to create a better understanding among teachers of the characteristics of a profession and the opportunity to accept responsibilities should come through local associations. However, there is a real need for a reexamination of local association practices. Too often the local association's professional advancement committee is no more than a salary committee, and the only other major functions of the local unit tend to be more socially than professionally oriented. A strong local association, properly oriented to professionalism, could be the greatest influence in providing incentives that would overcome the apathy of so many classroom teachers toward professional matters.

State associations might find it advantageous to make a more vigorous effort to interpret and clarify associational goals for their members. Since most resolutions adopted by associations' delegate bodies fall mainly within professional, associational, and working rights and benefits categories, it should be made clear to the constituents which phases require the greatest effort for professional advancement and which are essentially negotiational platforms. It should also be made clear what constitutes the *labor* phase of their program and let it be known that this aspect, while extremely important, does not contribute to professionalism per se. It is time for educators to face issues in a straightforward manner rather than to invent terminology that merely leads to misinterpretation and confusion.

It is of the utmost importance that there be more pressure from the state associations for greater participation in formulating programs that train teachers. More participation in the accreditation of teacher training institutions, especially of multi-purpose institutions, may need to be placed within the domain of the state associations. The professional organizations need to take the lead in eliminating or upgrading teacher preparatory programs in institutions of higher education that have low standards of preparation and, in the interim, preventing graduates from these substandard programs from practicing the profession. Autonomy for the profession in teacher education, accreditation, and certification, bolstered by public law, would do much to advance teaching to a professional level. Furthermore, a means for eliminating the incompetent from teaching, formulated by the association, would enhance the position of teaching as a profession. It is through the teachers associations that effective and reasonable autonomy for teachers can be attained and that a vitally needed Professional Practices Act can be formulated and promoted for legislative enactment.

This study lends support to the thesis that teachers tend not to accept responsibilities necessary for professional status. However, there were strong indications that, as a group, association leaders were knowledgeable about professional matters and willing to work toward attainment of professional goals. A major course of action that appears to be necessary for advancing professional status seems to be the creation of more awareness of responsibilities within the greater group of teachers.

A dual program may be in order. Local associations, with the cooperation of state and national associations, might well place greater emphasis upon conveying to its members a better understanding of professional ethics, responsibilities of a professional person, and, in general, a greater knowledge of the characteristics of a profession. Teacher preparatory institutions could include the foregoing as an integral part of a program in preparing potential teachers. Specific training to prepare candidates for becoming members of a professional group, as well as preparing them to teach, should contribute greatly to the professionalization of teaching.

Footnotes

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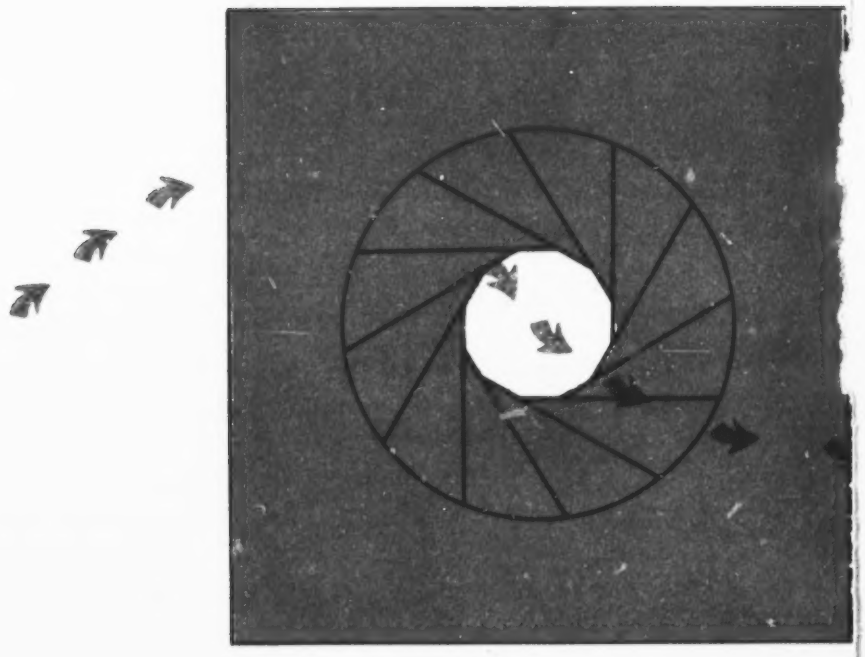

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE TEACHER - HOW DOES IT AFFECT

BIGNESS is surely the centerpiece of the modern American society. Demographers predict the eventual clustering of 95 per cent of our population in several burgeoning metropolises. One-tenth of all counties in the United States are growing larger; nine-tenths are becoming smaller. The corollary to these circumstances is legislative insistence that our school districts be reorganized to encompass more children and more territory. Such reorganization increases not only the number of people involved in intermediate administration but also the size of educational facilities.

Depersonalization

Regardless of the benefits that accrue from this sort of reorganization, the character of the affected institutions is inclined to become more impersonal just as the nature of the metropolis in which many of these institutions function is impersonal. For the individual, this resulting anonymity can be stifling and frightening. In the large school district, as in the large city, people hunger for someone to talk with them, someone to listen to them, and someone to work with them. These individuals are seeking recognition as individuals. When the frustrations of big city and big district aloneness become unbearable, these people, these professional teachers, become militant in their demands to have more to say in the management of their professional affairs. They want to take part in fixing standards for their professional be-

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